

Montreal Declaration (1996)

Towards a humanist and social vision of tourism

Aubagne Addendum (2006)

Towards a tourism based on development and solidarity



The Montreal Declaration, *Towards a humanist and social vision of tourism*, was adopted by the BITS General Assembly on 12 September 1996, following a vast survey among its members. It presents the assets of social tourism for tomorrow and the identification criteria of social tourism.

On 10 May 2006 in Aubagne, the BITS General Assembly reasserted the relevance and topicality of the Montreal Declaration by adopting an Addendum entitled *Towards a tourism based on development and solidarity*, which broadens the perspective and specifies the initial text.

Since paid holidays were obtained and recognized in 1936 in several countries in the West and the first World Congress on Social Tourism was held in Bern in 1956, social tourism and the environment in which it evolves have changed considerably. In order to fully take into account these new cultural, social and economic factors, those texts were adopted and are now put forward as reference tools for the stakeholders in the tourism branch.

Despite the democratization of tourism and the significant growth of this sector in recent years, the right to tourism for all, recognized by the UNWTO Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, is still an issue, since a significant segment of the population in various regions of the world still cannot take part in the benefits and revenues of the tourism activity.

Therefore, we believe it is perfectly justified to state that social tourism cannot be relegated to the margins of political, social and cultural life within society, as it was the case for too many years so far. On the contrary, it must act fully as “shaper of society”, “promoter of economic growth”, “stakeholder in regional planning and local development” as well as “partner of global development programs”, as it is clearly stated in the Montreal Declaration.

Social tourism will also develop towards news horizons in accordance with sustainable development and solidarity, always ensuring that humans, as persons and citizens, are at the centre of activities, as specified in the Aubagne Addendum.

In this context, the BITS members are invited to diffuse broadly the Montreal Declaration and the Aubagne Addendum to allow a large number of tourism operators, governmental and non-governmental organizations, associations and cooperatives to apply the values and principles stated in those documents.

The BITS President
Norberto Tonini

MONTREAL DECLARATION (1996)

TOWARDS A HUMANIST AND SOCIAL VISION OF TOURISM

Preamble

What does social tourism mean today? How do the key players in social tourism perceive their role? What are their beliefs and ambitions?

In the world today, what are the issues and the prospects facing us on the threshold of the third millennium?

Twenty-five years ago, in the Vienna Charter, BITS already set out the social, cultural, political and economic dimensions of tourism – a statement of fundamental significance for our time.

In turn, the World Tourism Organization, in its Manila Declaration, formally confirmed the objectives of social tourism.

What will social tourism mean in the years to come? This is the crucial issue to be addressed in the Montreal Declaration.

1 SOCIAL TOURISM : a high ideal in the face of discrimination and the challenge of integration.

Today in a world

- in which growth in the wealthiest countries is spasmodic, and whole sections of the population suffer increasing deprivation, resulting in serious social unrest,
- in which advances in science and information technologies go hand in hand with a reduced workforce, opening up as yet undreamed-of social and cultural opportunities,
- in which large economic alliances are formed, operating according to their own free-market logic,
- in which some countries experience rapid growth, opening up to the possibility of domestic tourism,
- in which other countries, and even whole continents, are trapped in appalling poverty,
- in which the right to a search for meaning is claimed everywhere,

... in this world, tourism is growing rapidly. We are witnessing spectacular increase in business and leisure travel, the opening-up of borders, the diversification of destinations, and new means of communication and transport.

Parallel to a global breakdown in the division between time devoted to work and time for leisure and travel, we are witness, in certain countries, to unacceptable forms of exploitation of local inhabitants, as extreme as the prostitution of children.

Art. 1 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that all human beings have the right to rest, leisure time, a limit to working hours, and to paid holidays.

This right is far from being universally accepted, the subjugation of leisure and tourism to the service of human needs must be vehemently pursued along the trail already blazed by social tourism, whose primary goal has always been access to travel and leisure opportunities for all.

Art. 2 The prime objective of all tourism development initiatives should be the full realization of each individual's potential, both as a person and as a citizen.

Social tourism: "a shaper of society"

Art. 3 The aim of making tourist leisure accessible to all - including families, youth and the elderly necessarily means being involved in the struggle against inequality and the exclusion of the culturally different, those of limited means or abilities, or those who live in developing countries.

To this end, specific measures need to be identified and implemented: the definition of social policies of tourism, the creation of infrastructures, the setting-up of support systems for the disadvantaged, awareness-raising and other staff training, etc. Modest initiatives, forming part of an overall strategy, can often be as effective "shapers of society", as large-scale projects.

Art. 4 Holidays and travel can provide particularly apt occasions for personal enrichment, through the discovery of new places, cultures and civilizations, through physical, artistic, sport and leisure activities, by meeting people across educational or generation divides, and by other responsibilities taken on freely by tourists.

Social tourism operators wish to contribute to the improvement of human relationships, both through their training and their animation activities; social tourism is a vehicle for social cohesion.

Social tourism: a promoter of economic growth

Art. 5 Hundreds of millions of people around the world travel and are welcomed by social tourism, which appeals to all income and age groups.

Social tourism flourishes in an economic climate informed by solidarity and social policy. In turn, social tourism offers, and will continue to do so to an increasing degree, an exceptional economic opportunity.

Tourism for all is a key to economic strength. It generates a continuous flow of people and investment, which contributes to regional development, produces national and international wealth, and stimulates the transfer of resources from the richer economies to the poorer countries.

Art. 6 Tourism must benefit the whole community. Its benefits must contribute to the social and economic development of regions and citizens as a whole. The tourism sector should both provide employment and guarantee the fundamental rights of all employees.

Art. 7 All the stakeholders in the development of tourism are subject to the same economic constraints. Whether as entrepreneurs, facility managers, tour organizers or guides, educators or entertainers, they are all economic agents, subject to the same expectations of competence, professionalism and performance.

The pursuit of a social development objective depends on exemplary management and improving results.

Social tourism: participation in regional planning and local development

Art. 8 Long before its promotion by international organizations, the concept of "sustainable development" had been adopted by social tourism and expressed in the following aims:

- reconcile tourism development, environmental protection and a respect for the identity of local communities;
- bring fresh resources into neglected regions;
- promote development without depletion of resources;
- generate local economic, social and cultural benefits.

While tourism is, on a global scale, one of the engines for regional development, it should never lead to the uncontrolled invasion of an area, the exploitation of the local population, or the destruction of its culture.

Art. 9 Tourism can, and should, represent hope for many fragile economies. The protection of the natural environment has to withstand acquisitive pressure from organizations or individuals intent on commercial or personal gain.

Art. 10 Social tourism, as entrepreneur and manager of tourist development projects, plays a key role with regard to tourists. Its duty is to raise awareness, inform and to inculcate respect for the environment and local communities.

Social tourism: a partner in global development programs

Art. 11 The Stockholm Conference on Population and the Environment, the United Nations programs and the Rio Earth Summit, among others, have clearly identified the responsibilities of present generations in setting limits to growth.

Tourism, when it is controlled and when it respects the natural environment and local communities, constitutes one of the economic, social and cultural hopes of many developing regions. For this reason, present and future social tourism operators are, and will be, well-placed to devise development projects, put in place legal and financial frameworks, and contribute to the management, training programs and animation of all tourist projects planned for global development programs.

Art. 12 Throughout the world, new forms of cooperation and partnership are, and will be, essential, since tourist development requires the support of many local authorities, social organizations, trade unions, financial partners, family, youth, cultural, sport, and ecology movements, and, of course, professionals in the tourist industry, among which, social tourism operators serving the public good.

3 SOCIAL TOURISM: IDENTIFICATION CRITERIA.

Art. 13 Any tourist organization (association, cooperative, mutual society, foundation, federation, not-for-profit organization, company etc...) which, by its articles of association or statement of aims clearly identifies with social objectives and the aim of making travel and tourism accessible to the greatest number, - thereby differentiating itself from the sole aim of profit maximization - may claim membership of the social tourism movement.

The word "social" may evoke an increased sense of solidarity and fraternity, and be a source of hope for those many people in the world today who still have no leisure time.

Art. 14 The validity of this claim is subject to the following verifiable conditions:

1. The proposed activities bring together social, educational and cultural objectives favoring the respect and the development of the individual.
2. The target public is clearly identified, without discrimination on racial, cultural, religious, political, philosophical or social grounds.
3. A non-economic added-value forms an integral part of the proposed product.
4. A will to non disruptive integration into the local environment is clearly expressed.
5. The type of activity and the price are clearly indicated in the contract documents. Prices are compatible with the stated social objectives. Annual surpluses, in whole or in part, will be re-invested for the improvement of services offered to the public.
6. Personnel management is in accordance with social legislation, and undertakes to promote job satisfaction and deliver appropriate on-going staff development training.

Art. 15 Tourism operators cannot look for justification to statutes or procedures, but rather to their actions in pursuit of a clearly stated objective.

Statutes vary indeed according to custom, practice and evolving legislation. It is only a means to an end. There is no single model in the world today.

AUBAGNE ADDENDUM (2006)

TOWARDS A TOURISM BASED ON DEVELOPMENT AND SOLIDARITY

Preamble

The Montreal Declaration (1996) has reminded of the historical and contemporary relevance of social tourism as a “shaper of society”, a “promoter of economic growth”, a “stakeholder in regional planning and local development” as well as a “partner of global development programs”.

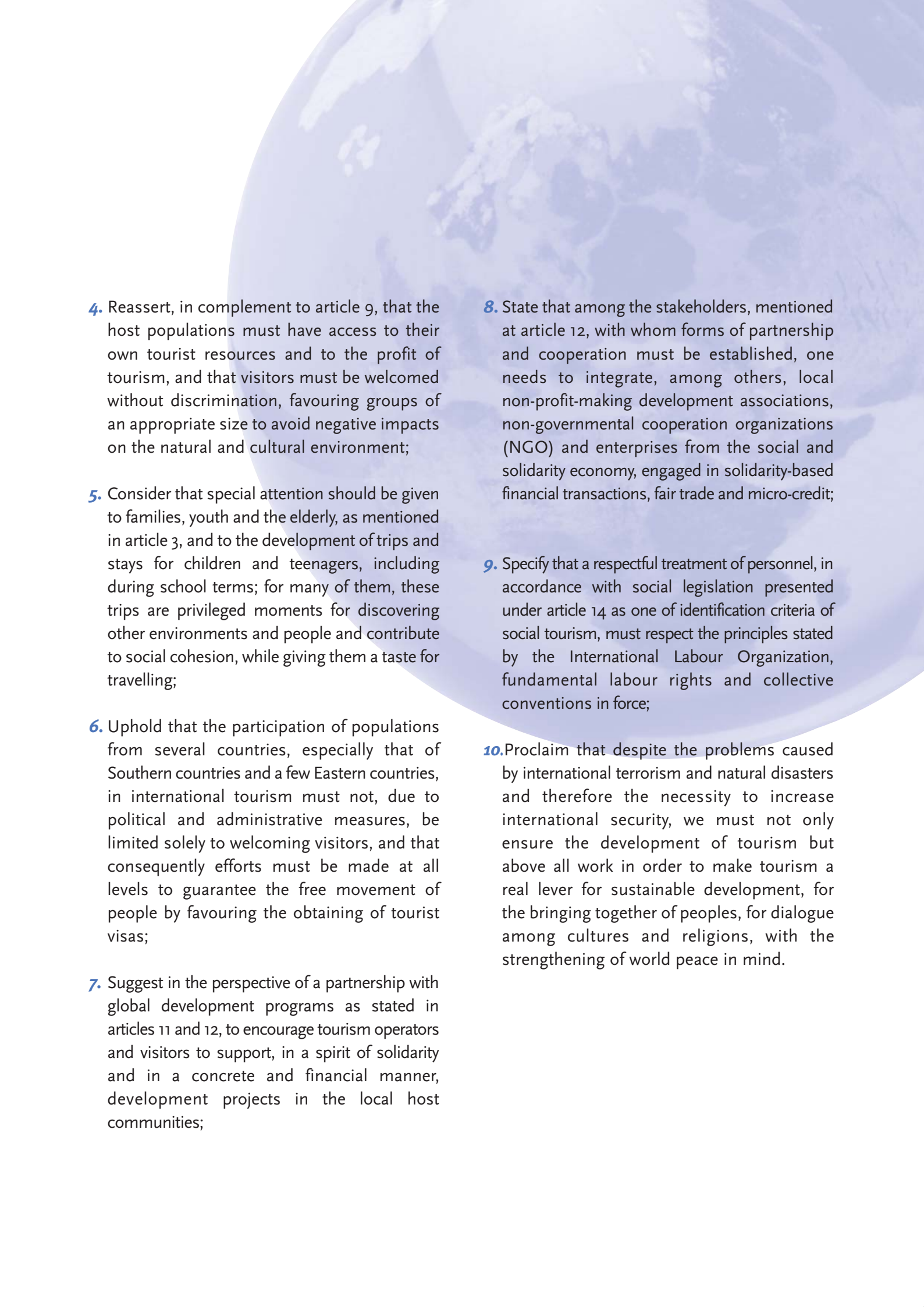
It has allowed to specify, at articles 13 to 15, the identification criteria of social tourism, which are not limited to sole legal aspects, although social tourism is mainly driven and governed by the social economy players, that is to say the associations and cooperatives. It has more than before emphasized the necessity to protect the environment and to respect the identity of local populations. The Montreal Declaration has introduced a relationship of solidarity among tourists and host populations aiming at a “sustainable development”.

Since the adoption of the Montreal Declaration in 1996, world tourism, characterized by a remarkable resilience, has continued to progress with periods of slowdown due to natural disasters, health hazards, wars, terrorism This is mainly a form of mass tourism, which does not always bring along the positive effects expected and leaves important segments of the population aside. Through its industrial structure, mass tourism too often causes a profit benefiting the countries of the visitors to the detriment of the host population, a phenomenon which is increasingly denounced by those offering soft forms of tourism by stressing the responsibility and solidarity of all the stakeholders involved in the chain of tourism.

Bearing this in mind, it is important to add a few precisions and additions to the Montreal Declaration.

BY REASSERTING THE TOPICALITY AND RELEVANCE OF THE MONTREAL DECLARATION ADOPTED IN 1996, BITS MEMBERS GATHERED AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HELD IN AUBAGNE IN MAY 2006

1. Remind, in reference to article 1, the role of independent and democratic workers' trade unions in the promotion and defence of every individual's right to working-hours limits and paid holidays;
2. Specify that the full realization of each individual's potential both as a person and as a citizen, which constitutes the prime objective of all tourism development initiatives, as asserted at article 2, concerns both visitors and host communities;
3. Wish that the stakeholders in the development of tourism subject to the same expectations of competence, professionalism and performance, according to the terms of article 7, ensure that their transactions allow to increase profit and economic repercussions for the host populations;

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4. Reassert, in complement to article 9, that the host populations must have access to their own tourist resources and to the profit of tourism, and that visitors must be welcomed without discrimination, favouring groups of an appropriate size to avoid negative impacts on the natural and cultural environment;
 5. Consider that special attention should be given to families, youth and the elderly, as mentioned in article 3, and to the development of trips and stays for children and teenagers, including during school terms; for many of them, these trips are privileged moments for discovering other environments and people and contribute to social cohesion, while giving them a taste for travelling;
 6. Uphold that the participation of populations from several countries, especially that of Southern countries and a few Eastern countries, in international tourism must not, due to political and administrative measures, be limited solely to welcoming visitors, and that consequently efforts must be made at all levels to guarantee the free movement of people by favouring the obtaining of tourist visas;
 7. Suggest in the perspective of a partnership with global development programs as stated in articles 11 and 12, to encourage tourism operators and visitors to support, in a spirit of solidarity and in a concrete and financial manner, development projects in the local host communities;
 8. State that among the stakeholders, mentioned at article 12, with whom forms of partnership and cooperation must be established, one needs to integrate, among others, local non-profit-making development associations, non-governmental cooperation organizations (NGO) and enterprises from the social and solidarity economy, engaged in solidarity-based financial transactions, fair trade and micro-credit;
 9. Specify that a respectful treatment of personnel, in accordance with social legislation presented under article 14 as one of identification criteria of social tourism, must respect the principles stated by the International Labour Organization, fundamental labour rights and collective conventions in force;
 10. Proclaim that despite the problems caused by international terrorism and natural disasters and therefore the necessity to increase international security, we must not only ensure the development of tourism but above all work in order to make tourism a real lever for sustainable development, for the bringing together of peoples, for dialogue among cultures and religions, with the strengthening of world peace in mind.

The International Bureau of Social Tourism is an international non-profit association whose mission is to promote access to tourism for all, with a special attention to low income population groups. With its network of members across the various continents, the BITS is nowadays considered the true World Organisation of Social Tourism. BITS members include associations, trade unions, cooperatives, private organizations as well as public authorities in charge of tourism.



International Bureau of Social Tourism
www.bits-int.org